

# U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine

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## A SOLDIER'S GUIDE TO STAYING HEALTHY IN CYPRUS

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# A SOLDIER'S GUIDE TO STAYING HEALTHY IN CYPRUS

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## INTRODUCTION

This country-specific guide should be used in conjunction with [GTA 08-05-062, \*Guide to Staying Healthy\*](#), and is intended to provide information that can help reduce your risk of Disease and Non-battle Injuries (DNBI) when deployed. This health threat and countermeasure information is based on the most current data available from U.S. Department of Defense medical agencies at the time of production. In addition to the information in this guide, you should also receive force health protection, health threat, and preventive medicine countermeasures training/briefings prior to and, as required, throughout the length of your deployment.

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## CYPRUS OVERVIEW

[Cyprus](#) is an island in the Mediterranean Sea. It is about three-fourths the size of Connecticut. It is 3,571 square miles in area and has a coastline 400 miles long. The island is situated in the northeast corner of the Mediterranean, 44 miles south of Turkey and 65 miles west of Syria.

The interior of Cyprus is flat and treeless. This area is called the Mesaoria (between mountains) and it spans from the west to the east coast. Mountain ranges border the north (Kyrenia Range) and south (Troodos Mountains). Mount Olympus is the highest peak (6,400 feet).

Cyprus has no permanent rivers but does have freshwater lakes and two saltwater lakes. Cyprus is made up of 47 percent farmable land and 19 percent forests. It experiences between 300 and 340 days of sun each year.

Cyprus has a temperate, Mediterranean climate, with hot, dry summers and cool winters. A cool rainy season extends from October to March. The average rainfall is less than 20 inches per year. The majority of the rain falls between December and February. It does not snow or frost in northern Cyprus, although the temperature at night can fall to low levels during the winter.

## CYPRUS RISK ASSESSMENT

Based on a combination of all major infectious diseases that occur in a country, an [overall country risk level](#) is assigned. Countries can be rated as low, intermediate, high, or highest risk. Cyprus is LOW RISK for infectious diseases. Although the risk of most diseases is low, mission effectiveness could be affected by sandfly fever unless force health protection measures are followed. (See justification below.) Environmental contamination may present short- and long- term health risks to personnel deployed to Cyprus.

The greatest short-term health risks are associated with water contaminated with raw sewage or runoff containing fecal pathogens, industrial waste, or agricultural chemicals. The greatest long-term health risks are associated with air contamination localized near urban and industrial areas.

This guide discusses specific disease and environmental risks and ways to eliminate or lessen those risks.

## DISEASES OF GREATEST RISK

Sandfly fever is the disease of greatest risk in the region. Sandfly fever is carried by the sand fly and is transmitted through its bite. A person can catch sandfly fever at any time during the year, but it is most common between July and October. The sand fly is found in all areas of Cyprus including urban areas. Sand flies usually bite at night and breed in dark places rich in organic matter. Sand flies are so small and the bites so

painless that oftentimes people do not realize sand flies are present. Because sand flies can fit through the mesh of bed nets, it is critical that uniforms and nets be treated with permethrin. Put N-diethyl-meta-toluamide (DEET) on exposed skin. See the section entitled Vector-Borne Diseases in this guide for more information about preventing sandfly fever.

## VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES

### DISEASE RISKS

As previously stated, sandfly fever is the vector-borne disease of greatest concern in Cyprus. Another disease of lesser risk, [leishmaniasis](#), does exist, and it is also caused by the bite of a sand fly. There may be other diseases spread by various insects and ticks. Your local medical authority will determine if these diseases or other vector-borne diseases are a threat in your specific location and provide appropriate countermeasures.

### PREVENTION

- When deployed to this region, use [the DOD Insect Repellent System](#) detailed in [GTA 08-05-062](#) to reduce your risk of acquiring a vector-borne disease.
- Wear permethrin-treated uniforms with trousers tucked into boots, sleeves rolled down, and undershirt tucked into trousers.
- Wear DEET on exposed skin.
- [Sleep under a permethrin-treated bed net](#) to repel insects and further reduce risks of vector-borne diseases. Many insects in this region feed during the night.
- When using both DEET and sunscreen products, apply sunscreen to the skin first so it does not interfere with the effectiveness of the DEET. After 30 minutes to an hour, apply the DEET. This allows the sunscreen to penetrate and bind to the skin first.

## FOOD-BORNE AND WATER-BORNE DISEASES OF POTENTIAL RISK

### DISEASE RISKS

Sanitation is generally good, but some places may be below U.S. standards, especially outside major urban areas. Diseases of potential risk (with a low or unknown likelihood of interfering with operations) include [brucellosis](#), [diarrhea \(bacterial and protozoal\)](#), [hepatitis A](#), and [typhoid/ paratyphoid fever](#). These diseases are associated with eating contaminated food and consuming contaminated water and ice. In addition, there is a risk of contracting [leptospirosis](#) from swimming or wading in contaminated water.

### PREVENTION

When you are deployed to Cyprus, assume all non-approved food, ice, and water is contaminated. Those deployed to this region should not eat any food or drink any water or beverages (including ice and bottled water) that have not been approved by the U.S. military as they may be contaminated.

To help prevent contracting leptospirosis, do not swim or wade in water that has not been treated with chlorine. If you must be exposed to non-chlorinated water, wear protective clothing and footwear. See [GTA 08-05-062](#) for appropriate countermeasures.

## **DANGEROUS ANIMALS AND PLANTS**

### **RISKS**

[Q fever](#) is a potential risk to those deployed to Cyprus. Cattle, sheep, and goats are the primary carriers of Q fever; however, Q fever can be found in a wide variety of other animals, including other breeds of livestock, and in domesticated pets. The Q fever germ is found in the milk, urine, feces and amniotic fluid of infected animals. Infection of humans usually occurs by breathing in dust that is contaminated with infected material.

Three species of venomous snakes live on the island of Cyprus. One of these snakes, the blunt-nosed viper, is a very dangerous snake. Its venom is very poisonous, and it may strike quickly and savagely when provoked. At least one species of scorpion, capable of inflicting painful stings, is present on the island.

### **PREVENTION**

- Do not make contact with wild or unknown domestic animals.
- Shake out boots, bedding, and clothing prior to use, and never walk barefoot.
- If you come into contact with a wild animal or unknown plant, decontaminate skin and clothing by washing with soap and water. Wild plants and animals should be considered unsafe.
- If you are bitten or stung, seek medical attention immediately.
- Always check dug-in fighting positions for potentially dangerous animals.

## **HOT AND COLD WEATHER INJURIES**

Temperature extremes in Cyprus may make an impact on military operations. Heat is a medical threat for soldiers deployed to this region, especially during the early phase of deployment; acclimatization is critical. Heat is more of a threat than cold, although cold injuries may be a threat in the mountainous areas. The effects of cold weather are more severe in high mountainous areas due to reduced oxygen and lower air pressure. When deploying to the mountainous regions of Cyprus, check with your unit on the requirement for packing the extended cold weather clothing system. See [GTA 08-05-062](#) for appropriate countermeasures.

## **SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES**

[Sexually transmitted diseases](#), such as gonorrhea, chlamydia, human immunodeficiency virus ([HIV](#))/[acquired immune deficiency syndrome \(AIDS\)](#) and [hepatitis B](#), occur throughout the region. Though the immediate impact of HIV/AIDS

and hepatitis B on an operation is limited, the long-term impact on your individual health is substantial. Those deployed should see [GTA 08-05-062](#) for appropriate countermeasures. **Anyone deployed to the region should not have unprotected sex and should not share needles.**

## TOXIC INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS AND MATERIALS

There have been reports of chemicals in food, water and soil in Cyprus due to industry and agriculture. In general, when deployed, you may face health risks from industrial chemicals and materials as a result of activities by terrorists or warring parties; accidents in local industrial facilities; accidental exposure to toxic waste materials in the environment; or disposal of U.S. deployment-related hazardous material. The degree of health risks depends upon many factors. Consult your medical authority for additional information.

## HIGH ELEVATIONS

High altitude illness is a significant threat in the mountains. Military operations occurring at elevations over 6,000 feet can seriously affect unit and individual effectiveness. Serious illness or death can result if you ascend rapidly without allowing yourself to get used to the change in altitude. Remain well hydrated; your body needs more water at higher altitudes.

- When deployed to high mountains and highly elevated urban areas, watch for the common symptoms of mountain sickness: headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, fatigue, irritability, and coughing. Seek medical attention immediately if you experience any of these symptoms.
- Pyridostigmine bromide tablets may increase the chance of dizziness or fainting during the first 24 hours at high altitude if you are not acclimated.
- Lower oxygen levels at high altitudes ("thin air") combined with the heavier work requirements when wearing mission-oriented protective posture (MOPP) gear can increase your risk of high altitude illnesses. When wearing MOPP gear at higher altitudes, you may require more time and concentration to perform assigned tasks.
- For appropriate countermeasures during high altitude operations, see [GTA 08-05-062](#) and [GTA 08-05-060, A Soldier's Guide to Staying Healthy at High Elevations](#).

## HEARING PROTECTION

It is essential that you use properly fitted [hearing protection](#) during military operations. Exposure to high-intensity noise may cause hearing loss that can adversely affect your combat effectiveness and individual readiness. Good hearing is essential to mission success. If you are a dismounted soldier, the [Combat Arms Earplug](#) (NSN 6515-01-466-2710) will protect you from the impact noise of weapons fire while only slightly interfering with voice communications and detection of combat sounds such as vehicle noise, footfalls in leaves, and the closing of a rifle bolt. Noise muffs or standard earplugs are very effective at preventing noise-induced injury, although they are not as effective as the Combat Arms Earplug in preserving your ability to hear important mission-related sounds. If you are a member of vehicle or helicopter crews, your combat vehicle crew or aircrew helmets have built-in hearing protectors.

## ORAL HEALTH

[Dental disease](#) is a common problem during deployments because it is not easy to pay attention to your mouth. You should deploy with toothbrush, dental floss, and fluoride toothpaste. Daily flossing and twice daily brushing of teeth is the best way to ensure prevention of gum disease and to decrease your risk of problems such as trench mouth and tooth decay. In difficult tactical environments, teeth should be brushed at least once a day. Seek medical attention immediately at the onset of any dental problems. You are more vulnerable to other diseases when your mouth is not healthy.

## SKIN DISEASES

Skin irritations and infections, such as athlete's foot and ringworm, are common medical threats during any deployment and are commonly caused by fungi. The best prevention is to maintain clean, dry skin. Never go barefoot. See [GTA 08-05-062](#) for additional countermeasure information.

## FIELD SANITATION TEAM

Each company-sized unit has a Field Sanitation Team (FST) whose members are trained (40-hour course) and fully equipped IAW [AR 40-5](#), [FM 4-25.12](#), and [FORSCOM REG 700-2](#). Know who the members of your FST are, and know how they can assist in preventing medical threats to your health. Become familiar with FST equipment and training.

## PRE-DEPLOYMENT HEALTH INFORMATION

[Complete the Pre-Deployment Health Assessment \(DD FORM 2795\)](#) to assess your state of health before deployment and to assist health care providers in identifying your medical needs and providing present and future medical care to you.

You will not have access to your health care record during the deployment. The Adult Preventive and Chronic Care Flowsheet ([DD FORM 2766](#)) will be used as your deployment health record. This document will include information on all your immunizations, any medications you are currently taking, and any ongoing medical problems that you may have. When you go through readiness processing, ensure that all appropriate information is documented on your DD FORM 2766. When you return home, this information will be placed in your regular health record.

## INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR HEALTH CARE WHILE DEPLOYED

It is important that you know where to seek health care while deployed. This may or may not be through the same channels as your home station. Ask your chain of command for more information.

While deployed, you must maintain your health and seek care whenever an illness or injury threatens your ability to complete your tasks. Your unit is depending on you. It is always better to seek care early since problems are easier to treat when caught early. Early treatment also helps to prevent the spread of disease to others in your unit.

## **POST-DEPLOYMENT HEALTH INFORMATION**

[Complete the Post-Deployment Health Assessment \(DD FORM 2796\)](#) to assess your state of health after deployment and to assist health care providers in identifying your medical needs and providing present and future medical care to you.

If you become sick after you return home, tell your physician that you were deployed.

Complete any medications as directed, and receive follow-on medical care/tests as directed.

**Contact your Preventive Medicine or Medical Support Unit for more information.**



*Prepared by:*

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